

Message Text

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SUBJECT: MAY 28-29 SICILIAN ADMINISTRATIVE ELECTIONS RESULTS

REF: A. PALERMO 507 B. PALERMO 557

SUMMARY: ON MAY 28-29, NEARLY 91,000 OF THE 118,000 ELIGIBLE VOTERS WENT TO THE POLLS IN 25 SICILIAN TOWNS. OF THESE, 12 MUNICIPALITIES VOTED UNDER THE PROPORTIONAL SYSTEM. VOTING FULLY CONFIRMED TRENDS SET IN NATIONWIDE BALLOTING OF MAY 14-15 (REF.A). THE DC MOVED UP ON ITS 1973 PERFORMANCE IN SAME COMMUNES AND IN THE 1976 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS. THE PCI GAINED SLIGHTLY OVER 1973, BUT LOST NEARLY 11 PERCENT OF ITS 1976 STRENGTH. THE PSI, REPUBLICANS AND PSDI ALL IMPROVED ON THEIR 1976 SHOWINGS WHILE THE LIBERALS AND MSI LOST GROUND. END SUMMARY.

1. AS NOTED REF B, THE MAY 28-29 SICILIAN VOTING SAMPLE WAS MUCH SMALLER THAN THAT OF THE MAY 14-15 ELECTIONS. MOREOVER, WHILE THE MID-MAY VOTE FEATURED A MIX OF SMALL (5,000) MEDIUM (10,000) AND UNCLASSIFIED

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MEDIUM-LARGE (OVER 20,000) TOWNS, NONE OF THE TOWNS VOTING LAST WEEK-END HAD POPULATIONS LARGER THAN 20,000. DESPITE THESE DIFFERENCES, VOTER PREFERENCES (TABLE BELOW) CONFIRMED THE DC'S UPWARD MOVEMENT AND THE COMMUNISTS' DECLINE. MOREOVER, THE INTERMEDIATE, LAY PARTIES STRENGTHENED THEIR PERCENTAGE POSITIONS VIS-A-VIS THE 1976 ELECTIONS AND RECOVERED MUCH OR ALL OF THE GROUND THEY LOST BETWEEN THE PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATIVE ELECTIONS IN 1973 AND THE 1976

PARLIAMENTARY VOTER

	1978	1973	1976	
PARTY	LOCAL	LOCAL	NATIONAL	
DC	43,01	39,46	40,42	
PCI	18,98	15,87	29,69	
PSI	16,42	18,66	12,50	
PSDI	4,95	4,53	2,99	
PRI	3,79	3,46	1,82	
PLI	0,33	0,86	0,55	
DN	0,18	----	----	
MSI-DN	8,89	9,59	10,37	
DP	0,54	----	1,08	
MIXED-LEFT	----	4,53	----	
MIXED-CENTER.LEFT	----	0,78	----	
MIXED-RIGHT	----	2,03	----	
"HETEROGENEOUS"	2,82	0,23	----	

2. THOUGH LOSING NEARLY 11PERCENT ON ITS 1976 SHOWING, THE PCI DID GAIN OVER 3 PERCENT (VERSUS 1 PERCENT ON MAY 14-15 ON ITS LAST MUNICIPAL-VOTE PERCENTAGE. SIMILARLY, LEFTIST ALLIANCES, DOMINATED BY THE PCI, ELECTED THREE MORE CITY ADMINISTRATIONS, (UP FROM 3 IN 1973) IN MAJORITY-VOTE TOWNS OF UNDER 5,000 INHABITANS.

3. OF SIDELINE INTEREST IN FACT THAT SOCIALISTS' STRONG RECOVERY SINCE 1976 CAME DESPITE HEAVY PSI LOSSES IN TWO LARGE CATANIA PROVINCE

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TOWNS (PALAGONIA AND SCORDIA) WHICH WERE THE ELECTORAL FIELDS OF FORMER PSI NATIONAL DEPUTY SALVINO FAGONE WHO IS CURRENTLY EVADING ARREST FOR A WIDE VARIETY OF PECULATIONS. IN THE PALERMO PROVINCE TOURIST-CENTER OF CEFALU', THE DC RETAINED ITS FORMER STRENGTH BUT RENEWED ITS RANKS WITH THE OUSTER OF THREE FORMER DC MAYORS, INCLUDING THE INCUMBENT.

4. COMMENT: PCI, DESCRIBING ITSELF AS "CAUTIOUSLY SATISFIED" WITH RESULTS, MADE MUCH IN PUBLIC OF PARTY'S "CAPTURE" OF THREE ADDITIONAL MAJORITY-VOTE TOWN COUNCILS AND OF PARTY'S 3 PERCENT BOOST SINCE 1973. IN PRIVATE COMMENTS (REFTEL), PCI ASSESSMENT IS REPORTEDLY MORE

REALISTIC, LESS SATISFIED. CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AT NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PARTY LEVELS SUGGEST THAT MAY 28-29 VOTE FULLY CONFIRMS MID-MAY TREND FAVORING THE DC, BUT SEE REASON TO UPSET MAJORITY FRAME

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WORK AT THE REGIONAL AND NATIONAL LEVELS. DESPITE IMPROVEMENT OVER PSI'S SHOWING IN 1976 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS, PARTY JUBILATION HAS BEEN MUFFLED BECAUSE OF SETBACKS IN SCORDIA AND PALAGONIA AND REASONS THEREOF. REPUBLICANS AND SOCIAL DEMOCRATS, ON OTHER HAND, PROFESS DELIGHT WITH IMPROVEMENTS IN THEIR 1973 AND 1976 POSITIONS. COLLINS

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